

Remote Soldiers come to post for readiness review

By Jeff Troth MEDDAC PAO



When the Soldiers in your command are spread out over six states you don't get to see them on a regular basis. That is the case for the commander of the Fort Carson Community Care Unit.

To meet the challenge, Capt. Jennae Pitts, CCU commander, has instituted a biannual Soldier Readiness Review.

"The SRR allows CCU Soldiers to fulfill their annual requirement like mandatory training and updating their emergency and life insurance forms," said Pitts. "But most importantly it allows us to do a face-to-face with our Soldiers."

While assigned to the CCU, wounded, ill or injured Soldiers are assigned to the Fort Carson unit, but live and receive treatment in their hometowns. The unit's area of responsibility encompasses six states – Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Wyoming and Utah. The CCU is part of the Warrior Transition Battalion, a subordinate of Medical Department Activity Fort Carson.

"I have to call in every day to my platoon sergeant and I meet with my nurse case manager every week on the phone," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Charles Layman, a Colorado National Guardsman who lives in Elizabeth, Colorado. "The SRR was the perfect time for me to be able to put a face to the names and voices I talk to on a regular basis."

The week-long stay on Fort Carson was not only beneficial to the Soldiers, but also the unit staff.

"I think the SRR is a good venue to see the other side of the Soldiers and their families," said Kendra Partee, a CCU nurse case manager. "Instead of just talking to them about their medical treatment, we also get the opportunity to see them interact."

The week started off with hands-on training during an Adaptive Reconditioning Program session. The CCU Soldiers and cadre competed in wheelchair basketball and seated volleyball.

"For a lot of people it was their first time doing either of these sporting events," Pitts said.

"Sports like these are kind of empowering, because it doesn't matter if you have a leg or you don't, you can all be together and play the same sport on an even playing field."

The commander pointed out that while most think of sports when the Adaptive Reconditioning Program is mentioned, the program is a lot more.

"Painting, darts, chess and board games are all part of adaptive reconditioning," Pitts said.

"The Soldiers are getting their minds to focus on other things besides what their situations are. They are actually getting out and interacting with people, socializing."

During the week, the CCU Soldiers met individually with their nurse case managers and other unit cadre to review their medical treatment and discuss services available to them in their hometowns, such as job fairs and physical fitness partnerships with the YMCA. During these sessions, the Soldiers covered their future goals in six categories: career, physical, emotional, social family and spiritual.

“Our plan encompasses the Soldier and the family because if the Soldier is injured, so is the family,” said Pitts. “We want to know what they want to do now that they are injured as far as their career in the Army.”

She said that one of her Soldiers, who has served in the Army for 28 years decided that he wants to retire and become a teacher. The unit transition coordinator is working with that sergeant to get him in to the Troops to Teacher program and to see what certification is needed to fulfill this goal.

Other activities of the week included SHARP, Domestic Violence and Dress-for-Success classes. The Soldiers also received physical assessments at the Army Wellness Center. For Lt. Col. Inez Wright, a CCU Soldier from Las Vegas, the Soldier Readiness Review allowed her the opportunity to find out about resources she will be able to utilize in Nevada.

“The SRR is a good way for us to connect with the CCU staff and ensure that we are doing what needs to be done,” said Wright. “This week also gave me the chance to see what resources, such as adaptive sports and the YMCA, which I can connect to in my community.”



CUTLINE:

As part of the Soldier Readiness Review, CCU cadre and Soldiers try their hand at wheelchair basketball during a class on Adaptive sports Reconditioning Program.